

We claim:

1. A load floor system for a vehicle with a seat assembly, a structural member under the seat assembly, and a floor space adjacent the seat assembly, said load floor system comprising:

a retractable panel coupled to the structural member;

a first link coupled to said retractable panel; and

a second link coupled to said retractable panel;

such that said retractable panel, said first link, and said second link cooperate as a portion of a four-bar mechanism to translate said retractable panel from a retracted position under the seat assembly to an extended position over the floor space thereby forming a load floor.

2. The load floor system of Claim 1 further comprising a leg panel extending from said retractable panel.

3. The load floor system of Claim 1 wherein said retractable panel defines a beveled corner to allow unimpeded egress and ingress of a passenger.

4. The load floor system of Claim 1 further comprising a secondary panel coupled to said retractable panel and to said structural member, said secondary panel being located under said retractable panel when in the retracted position and adjacent said retractable panel when in the extended position.

5. The load floor system of Claim 4 wherein said first link is pivotally connected to said retractable panel, and said second link is pivotally connected to said retractable panel.

6. The load floor system of Claim 5 wherein said first link is pivotally connected to said secondary panel, and said second link is pivotally connected to said secondary panel, such that said retractable panel, said first link, said secondary panel, and said second link cooperate as the four-bar mechanism.

7. The load floor system of Claim 5 wherein said first link is pivotally connectable to the structural member, and said second link is pivotally connectable to the structural member, such that said retractable panel, said first link, the structural member, and said second link cooperate as the four-bar mechanism.

8. The load floor system of Claim 7 wherein said first link is pivotally connectable to a front side of the structural member, and said second link is pivotally connectable to a back side of the structural member.

9. The load floor system of Claim 4 wherein said retractable panel is pivotally connected to said secondary panel about a first axis, said first link is pivotally connected to the secondary panel about a second axis, said second axis being radially displaced from said first axis, and said second link is pivotally connected to said retractable panel and pivotally connected to said first link, such that said retractable panel, said second link, said first link, and said secondary panel between said first axis and said second axis cooperate as the four-bar mechanism.

10. The load floor system of Claim 9 further comprising a leg panel connected to said second link, such that said leg panel nests adjacent said retractable panel in the retracted position and extends from said retractable panel to the vehicle in the extended position.

11. The load floor system of Claim 4 further comprising an access panel connected to said secondary panel for movement between an open position to allow access to a space under said secondary panel and a closed position.

12. The load floor system of Claim 4 wherein said secondary panel is connected to the vehicle for movement between an open position to allow access to a space under said secondary panel and a closed position.

13. A load floor system for a vehicle with a seat assembly, a structural member under the seat assembly, and a floor space adjacent the seat assembly, said load floor system comprising:

5 a secondary panel connectable to the vehicle under the seat assembly;
a retractable panel pivotally connected to said secondary panel about a first axis;
a first link pivotally connected to said secondary panel about a second axis, said second axis being radially displaced from said first axis; and
a second link pivotally connected to said retractable panel and pivotally connected to said first link;

10 such that said retractable panel, said second link, said first link, and said secondary panel between said first axis and said second axis cooperate as a four-bar mechanism to translate said retractable panel from a retracted position over said secondary panel and under said seat assembly to an extended position adjacent said secondary panel and over the floor space thereby forming a load floor.

14. The load floor system of Claim 13 further comprising a leg panel connected to said second link, such that said leg panel nests adjacent said retractable panel in the retracted position and extends from said retractable panel to the vehicle in the extended position.

15. The load floor system of Claim 13 wherein said retractable panel defines a beveled corner to allow unimpeded egress and ingress of a passenger.

16. The load floor system of Claim 13 wherein said secondary panel is connected to the vehicle for movement between an open position to allow access to a space under said secondary panel and a closed position.

17. A load floor system for a vehicle with a seat assembly, a structural member under the seat assembly, and a floor space adjacent the seat assembly, said load floor system comprising;

a retractable panel coupled to the structural member; and

5 a translating means for translating said retractable panel from a retracted position under the seat assembly to an extended position over the floor space thereby forming a load floor.

18. The load floor system of Claim 17 further comprising a leg panel extending from said retractable panel.

19. The load floor system of Claim 17 wherein said retractable panel defines a beveled corner to allow unimpeded egress and ingress of a passenger.

20. The load floor system of Claim 17 further comprising a secondary panel coupled to said retractable panel and to said structural member, said secondary panel being located under said retractable panel when in the retracted position and adjacent said retractable panel when in the extended position.